

# MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HURLOCK

## MINUTES

### FEBRUARY 28, 2011

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The Mayor and Council of Hurlock met in regular session at the Town Hall on Monday, February 28, 2011 with Mayor Joyce Spratt, and Council Members Cephas, Nordstrom, Adams, Durham, Henry, Clerk/Treasurer Kathleen Clough. Town Attorney Hugh C. Vinson was absent due to illness.

Mayor Spratt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and after the Pledge of Allegiance and the Invocation by Reverend McGrath, UPON MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER Adams AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER Durham, unanimously approved tonight's scheduled agenda.

#### PRESENTATION BY MR. THOMAS TRICE OF TGM GROUP REGARDING AUDIT

Mr. Trice reported on the 2010-2011 Financial Report for the Town of Hurlock. He stated that we are living in challenging times.

He stated that the Audit report was "Unqualified" and reflected fairly the position and activities of the Town, results of operations, and changes in cash flow.

He further explained that an "Unqualified" report was a good thing.

Mr. Trice said that this has been a year of transition for the Town, the Administration, and personnel. He referred the Council to Page five of the Financial Report for the report on "Financial Highlights" and "Overview of the Financial Statements. He stated that he would be happy to meet with the Council to discuss the fifty pages of the report in detail.

Mr. Trice said that when the budget was created in June of 2009, the Town budgeted to use One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) of opening cash to balance the budget. He explained emphasized that cash is what it is all about.

Mr. Trice described the Government Mandate (GASB45) for accounting for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). He said the estimate for the Town of Hurlock now stands at \$5,000,000 and that now has to be part of the Financial Report.

#### PERSONAL REMARKS OF MR. FRANK BITTNER REGARDING RECENT NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Mr. Frank Bittner addressed the Council and the Public. He stated that two years ago many of us in Town were witness to a great deal of miscommunications and things that shouldn't happen in a small town. "We are supposed to work together, Sometimes I's hear 'What planet are you from?' he said.

Mr. Bittner said that Hurlock has a lot to offer if we'd stop playing the games. "Who cares who sells dog food" he said. "In a small town it's not unusual for someone to be dealing with a relative." "Hurlock has a lot of promise if we would stop bickering, playing games, and greed. We are lucky to have the Dorchester Banner; many towns no longer have a local newspaper" he stated.

Mr. Bittner the addressed public perception and what is in the newspapers today. "How is it possible that the Council wants to discuss council salaries and someone wants to bring in a professional to study the issue?" He asked how many of us are out of work; many members ran for honesty. Why is it that Federalsburg helps their neighbors for Council salaries of \$1,000 per year? They aren't doing it for the money."

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Mr. Bittner continued, saying that we needed to take a step back; decisions have been made for the wrong reasons. He said that "Ocean City is great and the Council should go, but that it is the employees who deserve the training."

#### EARL MURPHY REPORT ON CHRISTMAS PARADE

Earl Murphy explained that the Christmas parade was started in memory of Mr. Wheatley, an educator who touched the lives of many children. Therefore, the Grand Marshall is always someone who has been involved with education. The parade Committee is working on the 2011 Christmas Parade now. They came out in the green last year by a few hundred dollars. He said that they were blessed with many anonymous donations.

#### CONSENT AGENDA (MINUTES, DEPARTMENT REPORTS)

UPON MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER Nordstrom AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER Durham, the Minutes of the February 14, 2011 were unanimously approved with an amendment to page five (5). The correction was that following a tie vote on Councilman Durham's Motion to Limit Council members' Compensation Package to \$10,000, the Motion died and no further action was taken, and additional remarks by Council member Christopher were to be added into the record.

#### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

It was reported that there was damage in Prospect Park. Picnic tables and the fence were broken. Also, the covers on the GFI Outlets have been broken. As the lights are on the same circuit, the lights will now not come on at night. The cost of repairs and replacements will be high and will take some time.

Trash pick-up is Tuesday and Friday for household trash. for bulk items call the Town office. Bulk pick up is on Thursday and the only cost to residents is for land fill fees. The Town does not pick up any construction debris.

#### HURLOCK POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Les Hutton said that the weather is getting warmer so let's work together as a community. If something is seen, just call the police department. He referred especially to the damage in Prospect Park as an example of how the perpetrators are taking away from the younger children in that neighborhood.

#### TREASURER REPORT

Clerk/Treasurer Kathleen Clough gave an extensive report regarding a comparison of what the goals were one year ago upon the change in Administration, and how many of those goals were accomplished in less than seven months, along with a monthly accounting of all incoming revenues and accounts payable paid.

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#### COUNTY COUNCILMAN RICK PRICE

Councilman Price reported that the Drainage project on Palmer Mill Road that has been clogging up when we have heavy water has been approved by the State. It is expected to be completed by the middle of May.

#### MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Spratt reminded citizens that there is now only one voting list and if qualified voters want to participate in Hurlock elections, they must register with the county Elections board.

#### OLD BUSINESS

#### A. COUNCIL SALARY AND EXPENSE ALLOCATION COUNCILMAN PARKER DURHAM

COUNCILMAN PARKER DURHAM MADE A MOTION TO DECREASE THE ANNUAL COMPENSATION PACKAGE FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS AT A TOTAL OF TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$10,000). THIS WOULD INCLUDE TRAINING CONFERENCES. NO OTHER COMPENSATION OR HEALTHCARE WOULD BE INCLUDED.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES TO BE BUDGETED AS A LINE ITEM IN THE 2011-2012 BUDGETED TO PLAN, NOT AS A REIMBURSEMENT.

**Councilman Durham** explained that Implementation would be as allowed. It would not affect any sitting Council member in their current term of office. The Council members who want to take advantage of Health Care Insurance may do so, but the cost would come out of that \$10,000 package.

#### **MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN NORDSTROM.**

#### **DISCUSSION:**

**Councilman Michael Henry** inquired if that included a reduction in the Mayor's salary as well. Councilman Durham stated that his motion referenced the Council only.

**Councilman Charles Cephas** stated that he is an officer in the National League of Cities and that it is a valuable asset to Hurlock to have him attend their conferences and to have that network.

UPON MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER Durham AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER Nordstrom, the Motion to decrease the total compensation package for Council Members at \$10,000 was passed with a vote of three to two.

#### VOTES

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS     | NAY |
| COUNCIL MEMBER NORDSTROM | AYE |
| COUNCIL MEMBER CEPHAS    | AYE |
| COUNCIL MEMBER DURHAM    | AYE |
| COUNCIL MEMBER HENRY     | NAY |

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**Councilman Christopher Adams** stated that he would like to discuss reducing the Mayor's salary at the next Executive Session. **Mayor Spratt** stated she had no problem with that, but that she is working forty to fifty hours a week and believes that she deserves every penny she is paid.

**B. COUNCIL INSURANCE, RETIREMENT BENEFITS COUNCILMAN MICHAEL NORDSTROM**

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL NORDSTROM MADE A MOTION TO AMEND THE EMPLOYEE HAND BOOK , SECTION IV, E-4 WHICH NOW READS:

ELECTED OFFICIALS. TOWN ELECTED OFFICIALS SHALL QUALIFY FOR HEALTH INSURANCE DURING THE TERM OF OFFICE. UPON LEAVING OFFICE, ELECTED OFFICIALS MAY REMAIN IN THE GROUP PLAN AND MAY CONTINUE TO QUALIFY FOR 100% PAID COVERAGE PROVIDED THEY HAVE SERVED FOUR TERMS OF OFFICE. IF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL HAS SERVED THREE TERMS OF OFFICE THEY QUALIFY FOR PARTICIPATION ON A 75% TOWN - 25% OFFICIAL COST SHARING BASIS. IF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL HAS SERVED TWO TERMS OF OFFICE THEY QUALIFY FOR PARTICIPATION ON A 50% (50% TOWN - 50% OFFICIAL) COST SHARING BASIS. UPON DEATH OF ELECTED OFFICIAL THE SAME RATE OF COVERAGE WILL CONTINUE FOR SPOUSE AND MINOR CHILDREN WHO WERE COVERED AS OF THE DATE OF ELECTED OFFICIAL'S DEATH.

**TO READ:**

ELECTED OFFICIALS. TOWN ELECTED OFFICIALS SHALL QUALIFY FOR HEALTH INSURANCE DURING THE TERM OF OFFICE AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE. UPON LEAVING OFFICE, ELECTED OFFICIALS MAY NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN.

THIS AMENDMENT WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE AS OF THE 2011 ELECTION.

**The Motion was seconded by Councilman Parker Durham.**

**Discussion:**

**Councilman Charles Cephas** stated that *"I think it's wrong, but majority rules. You are cutting off your heads. It is an injustice."*

**VOTES**

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS     | NAY |
| COUNCIL MEMBER NORDSTROM | AYE |
| COUNCIL MEMBER CEPHAS    | NAY |
| COUNCIL MEMBER DURHAM    | AYE |
| COUNCIL MEMBER HENRY     | AYE |

UPON MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER Nordstrom AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER Durham, the Motion to AMEND THE EMPLOYEE HAND BOOK TO AMEND SECTION IV, E-4 to read: *ELECTED OFFICIALS. TOWN ELECTED OFFICIALS SHALL QUALIFY FOR HEALTH INSURANCE DURING THE TERM OF OFFICE AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE. UPON LEAVING OFFICE, ELECTED OFFICIALS MAY NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN. THIS AMENDMENT WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE AS OF THE 2011 ELECTION.*

THE MOTION PASSED WITH A VOTE OF 3-2.

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#### C. BUDGET RETREAT

**Councilman Michael Nordstrom** brought up the vote that was taken at the last meeting to have a moderator at the Budget Retreat. He said the Council could hold it at the train station rather than offsite and he did not want a moderator.

**Councilman Adams** said that was already voted on at the last meeting and it shouldn't be changed now.

UPON MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER Cephas AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER Nordstrom, the Motion to *rescind the vote at the last meeting' motion and to convene at the train Station with no outside people present for the Council Budget Retreat.*

#### VOTES

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS     | NAY |
| COUNCIL MEMBER NORDSTROM | AYE |
| COUNCIL MEMBER CEPHAS    | AYE |
| COUNCIL MEMBER DURHAM    | AYE |
| COUNCIL MEMBER HENRY     | AYE |

THE MOTION PASSED WITH A VOTE OF 4-1.

#### COUNCIL REMARKS

**Councilman Michael Henry** said he had nothing to say.

**Councilman Christopher Adams** said that he had nothing to say.

**Councilman Michael Nordstrom** said that he was happy to hear what the Administrative Department of Public Works Coordinator Tony Gilliard had to say about the Regular trash pick-up. When asked about a Spring Clean-up for the Town, Mr. Gilliard stated that there will be a bulk pick up in April, just as last year.

**Councilman Charles Cephas** stated that we need to start a dialogue to do what is necessary; tonight's meeting was civil and the Council got some work done.

**Councilman Parker Durham** said that it was good to see a large crowd.; Spring is approaching with storms; this is a good time to see your neighbors and for all to be helping our neighbors. He asked the people to watch their neighbors – there is a lot of illness going around now. He said that it was good to hear the Financial Statement clearly; we had debt and we are paying it down and we have not borrowed and more money this past fiscal year. He said in this way the Town will make progress.

Cedric Turner announced that Captain Holmes will be at the meeting March 3, 2011 at 7:00 P.M. at the Fire House and encouraged families to bring their children to learn how to be aware of, and how they can protect themselves from drugs, alcohol, and gangs.

**Mayor Spratt** said there are some things happening with interest in bringing businesses to Town. She met with a developer who wants to bring three to four businesses to Hurlock, and another couple who are looking to start a business.

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**Mayor Spratt** announced that we will go back to having a public speaking opportunity at the next meeting. Residents and Non-residents will have to sign in and bring the list to the mayor prior to the start of the meeting, and each person may speak for up to two minutes.

**Mayor Spratt** said that she initiated this practice when she came into office but it was being abused; however, she enjoyed it the first six months of her tenure and wants to bring it back to give all an opportunity to make announcements and to express their thoughts.

UPON MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER Nordstrom AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER Adams, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Clough, M.S.  
Clerk/Treasurer